

20<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents and carers,

Following my letter last week, I would like to provide you with a further update regarding reopening the school, initially for children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6.

Before I start, I would like to inform you that school will be closed over the half term break (Monday 25<sup>th</sup> – Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May) so please do not expect responses to emails during this time or for staff to ring you. We reopen for the children of key workers from Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June and the school remains open for these children throughout next half term. All relevant families have been contacted this week regarding their requirements for childcare next half term. If you were not contacted, but think that you are classed as a key worker, and would like your child to attend school, please contact the school office, by email, as soon as possible.

Concerning reopening the school to other children, I am sure that you are aware, from the coverage in the news recently, that planning for this is proving to be very challenging. Each school has to make plans that suit their circumstances, considering staff available to work on site, layout of building, size of rooms, whether PPE is required etc. It is still possible that the government will make the decision (probably on 28<sup>th</sup> May) that schools should not reopen at this point. However, we are planning towards reopening in the best way possible, following the latest government advice.

This week, I have communicated with our Governing Body, staff, colleague Headteachers and the local authority about the proposed reopening of schools. Guidance comes out to schools on a daily basis and there is much discussion about what is best for children and staff. Below is a brief summary of key points raised in the guidance:

- Children who are in the clinically vulnerable or extremely clinically vulnerable group should remain at home as this is the safest option.
- Children who return to school will be in 'bubbles'. Guidance states that these groups must be of no more than 10 for Reception and Year 1 children, no more than 15 for Year 6 children, until further notice. However, our groupings for Year 6 will have to be no more than 10 since our classrooms would not allow us to maintain the 2m distance with 15 pupils.
- Children will not be able to move to other bubbles until the government guidance on social movement is lifted.
- Children may not be with their friendship groups due to these smaller bubbles.
- It is likely that your child will not be in their usual classroom and will not have their class teacher.
- The curriculum will be different to normal curriculum delivery as not all resources will be available to the children to prevent the spread of the virus. Children at school will follow the same learning as those at home.
- Break and lunchtime will be separate across the school. Children will eat a cold lunch (brought from home or provided by our school meal service) in their classroom then they will have a slot to access the outside areas for non-contact play and fresh air.
- Bubbles will remain together for the day and will not mix with other bubbles.
- Play equipment will be limited.
- PE lessons will be very limited as we will be unable to clean the equipment between each bubble using it.
- If your child has an EHCP, the support they receive may not be from their usual staff and it is likely that provision will have to be delivered in a different way than usual.
- Children will have staggered drop off and pick up times to keep children, staff and parents/carers safe. We will be very strict about entry and exit to school. Staff will not be able to talk to parents/carers at the gate. Communication will need to be via email or phone call to the office.
- Breakfast and After School Clubs remain closed until further notice.

- We cannot guarantee that children will keep a social distance from your child at all times. Young children are naturally social and gravitate towards each other and staff.
- We cannot eliminate the possibility that your child may be exposed to the virus at school.
- If your child is suspected of displaying symptoms they must be collected from school immediately.
- Special events and assemblies have been cancelled until further notice.

Below is a link to the government's information to parents and carers regarding schools:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers?utm\\_source=cc9c1c49-4c5e-4748-8698-06ec4a877f73&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers?utm_source=cc9c1c49-4c5e-4748-8698-06ec4a877f73&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

We have undertaken a detailed risk assessment of the school in accordance with Department for Education and Local Authority advice in order to determine what we can offer.

We have made the decision to open the school on Monday-Thursday each week from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June for specific groups of Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 children. On Fridays, the school will not be open, other than for children of key workers, in order for staff to plan for in school learning, produce home learning packs for the children still learning at home, make phone calls to children still at home and respond to emails where children have sent work in to their teachers. We will not have any additional staff to cover the time needed for these tasks and we would not want to bring other adults into the bubbles for health and safety reasons. On Fridays, extra cleaning will also be carried out, in addition to the regular and increased cleaning that will occur throughout each day.

We will not be able to have all children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 on the premises at the same time; we will therefore operate on a rota system, with children attending for one week (Monday-Thursday) out of every two or three, depending on how many children will be returning. The current government guidelines do not require your child to return to school and we fully understand if you do not wish to take up any offer that you may be given. You will not be fined if you choose not to send your child back to school. If you decide to keep your child at home, we will continue to provide home learning for them and teachers will maintain contact by telephone and email.

**Class teachers will ring every family who has a child in Reception, Year 1 or Year 6 on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June to ask whether you intend for your child to return to school for the second half of the summer term.** Please let them know clearly whether your child will be returning or will not be returning – we will use this information to plan the bubble groups of children and allocate staff to each bubble. It will not be possible to accommodate additional children if you change your mind so please make sure that you have considered the information in this letter and government advice to inform your decision. Please keep these calls focused on providing us with this information only – teachers will have up to 30 calls to make so they will not be able to discuss other issues at that time. Teachers will not know which children will be in a bubble together or which staff will teach them at that point.

Once we know numbers of children wishing to return, we will allocate children to bubbles and inform the parents/carers of when each child can be in school. Teachers will decide on which children should be in each bubble, with the aim of placing every child with one or more of their friends where possible but this cannot be guaranteed. It will not be possible to change these bubbles once decided so please do not put staff in a difficult position by asking us to do so.

Government advice may well change over the next few days and weeks. We will therefore make plans that are more specific during the week beginning 1<sup>st</sup> June and during that week we will also train staff, prepare classrooms, update signage etc. For those returning, we will give details at that point regarding uniform, stationery, resources, water bottles, lunch boxes etc.

For those children who do return to school in June, we will work hard to keep them safe and happy in their bubbles. We will carefully explain to them how we must operate within our bubbles. Parents and carers will also play a key role in preparing their child and supporting the school. If you have any further questions, please contact me via the school office email.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Sansom, Headteacher